



VICTORIA AVENUE SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

February 2011

This is the first newsletter for 2011 from your Board of Trustees.

The Board has eight meetings scheduled this year (check the calendar on the VAS website for dates) and we will be sending out a newsletter following each meeting to update parents on key matters being considered by the Board.

Rob Hamilton has been elected as the new Chair for 2011, and takes over from Vlad Kozak who was Chair for the previous four years. The Board extends a big “thank you” to Vlad for his tremendous commitment and contribution to our school during this time.

The Board of Trustees

First, here is a quick reminder of who is on the Board of Trustees:

Parent Representatives:

- Rob Hamilton (Chair) – father of Josh (Yr6) and Emma (Yr5)
- Kim Grenfell (Deputy Chair) – mother of Sam (Yr6) and Sophie (Yr4)
- Vlad Kozak – father of Isabella (Yr4)
- Garry Scarborough – father of Nic (Yr5)
- Alana de Bruyn – mother of Jenna (Yr4)

Staff Representative: Sharon Reynolds (Room 12)

Principal: Allan Short – father of Owen (Yr4), Evie (Yr3) and Lachie (Yr1)

An important issue for the Board is succession planning to ensure continuity of experience and knowledge following the three-yearly elections. In the 2010 elections, three out of the five parent representatives continued on the Board, thereby providing a good level of continuity. The Board will be looking closely at succession planning this year to ensure we have appropriate continuity going forward over the next three to five years.

Strategic Plan

The Board updated the vision, values and strategic goals for our school at the end of 2009. Full details of our vision, values and goals can be found in the School Charter on the VAS website.

The Board will be considering at its next meeting how it will make progress towards achieving the six strategic goals during 2011. We will provide an update on these plans in the next Board of Trustees newsletter.

Student Achievement

A key role of the Board is to monitor student achievement throughout the school.

National Standards were introduced during 2010 and created lots of news in the media and the education sector. VAS deliberately didn't join the public debate and instead focused on providing the best teaching and learning environment for our children.

As discussed at our parent forum in 2010, the staff team have worked extremely hard to integrate our already excellent range of standardised assessment tools with other formal and informal assessment methods to progress the implementation of *National Standards* in our school.

National Standards pose many issues, not least of which is ensuring high quality moderation within and between schools. As the MOE recognises there is still much work to do in this area. While it is still challenging at this early stage to benchmark our children against *National Standards*, our assessment for 2010 is that over 90% of our children were at or above the *National Standards* for Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

The Board is naturally delighted with these results and believe they reflect the excellent teaching and learning standards at our school.

As was highlighted in 2010, the *Parent Portal* will be introduced during the course of 2011 at our school. This will provide all parents with online access to a wide arrangement of student information, including all standardised student achievement results for their children, and school reports.

2011 Budget

The Board approved the financial budget for 2011 at its meeting in December 2010. In setting the 2011 budget, the Board has focused on ensuring we continue to have a high quality teaching and learning environment for all our children.

Key points for parents to note in relation to the 2011 budget are:

- VAS is budgeting to make a modest operating surplus of approximately \$50,000, based on operating income of approximately \$950,000 and operating expenses of approximately \$900,000
- The Ministry of Education provides 52% of our operating income, with the remaining 48% coming from parents and the school community (reflecting our position as a decile 10 school)

- The Board is continuing to fund two additional teachers over and above the Ministry of Education entitlement

As part of the 2011 budget, the Board also approved a significant capital expenditure programme totalling approximately \$325,000. The key items in this programme are:

- Refreshing the interiors of Rooms 8-10 (already completed)
- New junior school and library computers (already installed)
- Extension of junior school shade cover
- Room 7 upgrade
- Wooden deck outside Rooms 7-10
- Junior school furniture upgrade
- Upgrading alarm and smoke detector system (already installed)
- New school hall sound system
- New library books and class dictionary sets

The Board is committed to improving the physical environment of our school as reflected by this capital expenditure programme. However, funding this programme will use up a significant portion of our cash reserves.

This highlights the critical importance to our school of the income that is provided by parents and the school community. Without the level of support we receive from parents and the school community, many of our initiatives would need to be cut back significantly.

School Contributions

As you will be aware, the Board set the annual school contribution for 2011 at \$460 per child, the same level as in 2010.

School contributions represent the largest single income source for our school other than the grant from the Ministry of Education. However, in 2010 school contributions were not paid for one in every six children at VAS. This represents a shortfall of approximately \$40,000, a significant amount for our school.

Given the plans being progressed by the Board for 2011, it is very important that we raise as much as possible through school contributions. We also encourage all parents to pay in full during Term 1 if you are able to do so. There is even the opportunity for parents to contribute additional amounts if you wish.

The Board intends to follow-up with all families regarding school contributions at the end of Term 1.

Principal Appraisal

Another key role of the Board is to support and monitor Allan Short as our Principal. Part of this role involves an annual appraisal of our Principal.

The most recent appraisal was completed in December 2010 and reviewed by the Board at its December meeting. The Board enlisted the expert assistance of Ron Scott, a leading education consultant and a former school principal, to assist with the appraisal process.

We are delighted to report that Allan received a glowing appraisal report from Ron Scott. To quote directly from Ron's report:

"He is an experienced and effective school leader. He demonstrates quite outstanding leadership traits and qualities that were affirmed by staff during interviews and from survey feedback."

"He has a clear and appropriate vision shaped by his focus on children and his set of core values. He demonstrates high levels of professionalism, commitment and dedication to his role having a clear appreciation of his pivotal role within the school."

"Allan is also student focused wanting the best for the students in all pursuits. He has kept himself well up to date with current trends in education and in pedagogy and this brings him high credibility with his colleagues."

The Board wishes to publicly thank Allan for the outstanding contribution he makes to our school in his role as the Principal.

ERO Visit

Our school will be visited by the Education Review Office (ERO) this year as part of the three-yearly review cycle. The visit is expected to be in either Term 3 or Term 4.

The ERO visit is an important event for our school as it provides an independent external assessment of how we are performing. The report from the previous ERO visit in 2008 is available on the VAS website.

The Board is delighted that our school has started 2011 with such wonderful spirit and energy, and is looking forward to another very successful year ahead.

Best wishes for Term 1.

Rob Hamilton
Chair